IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered). Please AMEND claims 1-9 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A switching device for parallel connection of a ~~number~~ plurality of subscriber terminal devices, said switching device comprising:

~~an insert unit for providing~~ a plug-in module having a ~~number~~ plurality of subscriber interfaces, each connected to one of ~~said~~ the subscriber terminal devices; and

a control unit having:

a central control unit for controlling central switching events in said switching device; and

a peripheral control unit for controlling linking of said number of subscriber interfaces to said subscriber terminal devices, said peripheral control unit having[[:]] an interface driver for controlling at least two of said subscriber interfaces, said interface driver having:

a ~~principal~~ master subscriber control unit for controlling a principal subscriber terminal device;

at least one subsidiary subscriber control unit for controlling at least one subsidiary subscriber terminal device;

a central driver control unit for central controlling of administration events in said interface driver;

a first connection device ~~for~~ physically connecting said ~~principal~~ master subscriber control unit and said at least one subsidiary control unit; and

a second connection device ~~for~~ logically connecting said ~~principal~~ master subscriber control unit to said at least one subsidiary subscriber control unit separately from said first connection device.

2. (currently amended) The switching device according to claim 1, wherein said ~~principal~~ master subscriber control unit comprises:

a first line process unit for linking to said central control unit;

a first connection process unit for controlling a connection setup for a ~~pertaining~~ first subscriber terminal device;

a first terminal device process unit for generating logical messages for controlling ~~a pertaining~~ the first subscriber terminal device; and

a first key converter process unit for converting said logical messages into functional messages for direct control of ~~a pertaining~~ the first subscriber terminal device; and

wherein said subsidiary subscriber control unit comprises:

a second line process unit for linking to said central control unit;

a second connection process unit for controlling a connection setup for a ~~pertaining~~ second subscriber terminal device;

a second terminal device process unit for generating logical messages for controlling ~~a pertaining~~ the second subscriber terminal device; and

a second key converter process unit for converting said logical messages into functional messages for direct control of ~~a pertaining~~ the second subscriber terminal device.

3. (currently amended) The switching device according to claim 2, wherein said first connection device comprises an internal connection process unit for physically connecting said first connection process unit to said second connection process unit.

4. (currently amended) The switching device according to claim 2, wherein said second connection device comprises a message interface for logically connecting said first terminal device process unit to said second terminal device process unit.

5. (currently amended) The switching device according to claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the subscriber terminal devices are connected in parallel to said switching device and ~~comprise~~ include at least one digital wire-bound subscriber terminal device and a cordless subscriber terminal device[[;]], and

wherein said switching device ~~represents~~ is a private branch exchange.

6. (currently amended) A method for connecting a number of subscriber terminal devices in parallel, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

establishing a physical connection of said subscriber terminal devices to be connected in parallel; and

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<u>separately</u> establishing a logical connection of said subscriber terminal devices to be connected in parallel.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 6, wherein ~~said~~ <u>the</u> logical connection is established by:

acquiring a complex telecommunication performance feature as a functional message;

converting ~~said~~ <u>the</u> acquired, functional message into a logical message;

acquiring a parallel connection configuration; and

transmitting ~~said~~ <u>the</u> logical message to a terminal equipment process unit connected in parallel.

8. (currently amended) The method according to claim 7, wherein ~~said~~ <u>the</u> logical connection is further realized by:

interpreting ~~said~~ <u>the</u> logical message as either a local or an external telecommunications performance feature;

transmitting ~~said~~ <u>the</u> logical message to either an internal or an external performance feature implementation unit, dependent on said ~~interpretation~~ <u>interpreting</u> of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> logical message; and

implementing ~~said~~ <u>the</u> telecommunications performance feature dependent on ~~said transmitted~~ <u>the</u> logical message.

9. (currently amended) The method according to claim 6, wherein said ~~establishment~~ <u>establishing</u> of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> physical connection and ~~said~~ <u>the logical</u> connection of said subscriber terminal devices to be connected in parallel is hierarchically ordered.